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->From the Editor’s Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"

And you thought that the presidential election was all over!? Things have already been heating up more since Election Day; and we’re still two months from the upcoming inauguration. Partisan challenges have been made, but many are being tempered with attempts of bipartisan cooperation. Truly, politics is still the name of the game. Obama’s next term should prove interesting, to say the least!

Next week, we’ll be celebrating one of my favorite holidays, Thanksgiving. As I’ve written over the years, it will be a day of preparation of a turkey dinner. As we like, it will be a quiet celebration. I’m looking forward to the preparation and then the meal; it usually means a terrific turkey dinner and all the fixin’s once a year! I hope that all of our A-ONE readers that celebrate the holiday also have a terrific day with family and friends. And, plenty of leftovers!

Until next time...

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->In This Week’s Gaming Section - ’Halo 4’ Launch Day Sales Top $200 Million!
  Nintendo To Shake Up Gaming Again with Wii U!

  AtGames To Launch Atari Flashback 4!
  And much more!

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->A-ONE’s Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

’Halo 4’ Launch Day Sales Top $200 Million

Microsoft s Halo 4 earned a whopping $220 million in opening day sales, smashing previous records set by the franchise.

The largest launch in the history of the franchise, Halo 4 has earned a total of $300 million in global sales since its launch last Tuesday. In contrast, Halo:Reach, the fourth game in the franchise, earned just $200 million in global sales on launch day.

We re thrilled that Halo 4 has emerged as the biggest U.S. entertainment launch of the year, said Phil Spencer, corporate vice president of Microsoft Studios in press release announcing the milestone. Thanks to the millions of fans worldwide who helped make this another record-breaking launch for the Halo franchise, Halo 4 is kicking off a strong holiday season and has become the must-have blockbuster experience of the year.

Sales for Halo 4 put the franchise over $3.38 billion in lifetime sales, making the game one of the most popular entertainment franchises in the world.

Nintendo Seeks To Shake Up Gaming Again with Wii U

It can scan zombies, replace a TV remote, open a window into virtual worlds and shoot ninja stars across a living room. It’s the Wii U GamePad, the 10-by-5-inch touchscreen controller for the successor to the Wii out Sunday, and if you ask the brains behind the "Super Mario Bros." about it, they say it’s going to change the way video games are made and played.

"You can’t manufacture buzz," said Nintendo of America president Reggie Fils-Aime. "You can’t manufacture word of mouth. All we can do is to provide the product and the games to foster some sparks that hopefully enable that to happen. We think we have that with Wii U."

Much like the iPad, the curvaceous GamePad features a touchscreen that can be manipulated with the simple tap or swipe of a finger, but it’s surrounded by the kinds of buttons, bumpers, thumbsticks and triggers that are traditionally found on a modern-day game controller. There’s also a camera, stylus, microphone, headphone jack and speakers.

While the Wii U can employ its predecessor’s motion-control remotes with a sensor bar that similarly detects them in front of the TV, the console’s focus on two-screen experiences makes it feel more like a high-definition, living-room rendition of the Nintendo DS and 3DS, the Japanese gaming giant’s dual-screen hand-held devices, than the original Wii.

"It’s a second screen like a tablet or a cellphone, but it’s different," said Mark Bolas, professor of interactive media at the University of Southern California. "In addition to providing more information, the GamePad is also a second viewpoint into a virtual world. Nintendo is letting you turn away from the TV screen to see what’s happening with the GamePad."

The touchscreen controller can also serve as a makeshift TV remote control and online video aggregator for services like Netflix and Amazon Instant Video. (Nintendo cheekily calls it TVii and announced Friday that it won’t be available until December.) Some games have the ability to flip-flop between the TV screen and the GamePad screen, allowing for non-gaming use

of the TV.

There are limitations to the GamePad: it won't work after it's been moved 25 feet away from the Wii U console; it lasts about three to five hours after charging; and while its touchscreen is intuitive as those that have come before it, the GamePad is not quite as simple to use as the Wii controllers that had everyone bowling in their living rooms.

"Is the GamePad more complex than the Wii Remote was six years ago? Certainly," said Fils-Aime. "On the other hand, I believe consumers will easily grasp the GamePad and what we're trying to do with the varied experiences we'll have not only at launch but over the next number of years in this system's life."

The abilities of the GamePad are most notably showcased by Nintendo Co. in the amusement park-themed mini-game collection "Nintendo Land," which comes with the deluxe edition of the console. "Nintendo Land" turns the GamePad into several different tools, such as the dashboard of a spaceship or the ultimate advantage in a game of hide-and-seek.

In other titles, the controller mostly eliminates the need to pause the action to study a map in order to figure out where to go next or scour an inventory for just the right weapon. That can all be achieved simultaneously on the GamePad screen, which is best illustrated among the launch titles in Ubisoft's survival action game "ZombiU."

The GamePad acts as a high-tech scanner in "ZombiU" that can analyze a player's surroundings in a version of London overrun by zombies. It pumps up the terror by drawing players' attention away from the horrors lurking around them.

Will gamers who've grown up with their eyes glued to the TV and hands gripped on a controller adapt to glimpsing at another screen? The Wii U edition of "Call of Duty: Black Ops II," for example, invites players to customize their arsenal on the fly on the GamePad, as well as engage in multiplayer matches without needing to split the TV in half.

Nintendo expects 50 games will be available for the Wii U by March 2013. There will be 23 games released alongside the console when it debuts Sunday, including the platformer "New Super Mario Bros. U," karaoke game "Sing Party," an "armored edition" of "Batman: Arkham City" and the Mickey Mouse adventure "Disney Epic Mickey 2: The Power of Two."

"New consoles come along and nobody exploits their full capabilities for the first two to three years," said Warren Spector, creative director at "Epic Mickey 2" developer Junction Point Studios. "It's only after you've had two or three projects that you fully understand what the hardware is capable of doing. We're going to be experimenting with it more."

Fils-Aime said he's already envisioning ways that developers will innovate with future games. He pointed to some of the console's features that aren't on display in the launch line-up, such as the ability to play with two GamePads at once or utilize the console's near-field communication technology to interact with other gadgets in the room.

"I think that developers and consumers are ready for new experiences," said Fils-Aime. "More than anything else, I think that's what is driving excitement for Wii U. They've experienced what this generation has to offer. They're ready for something new."

PS3 Worldwide Sales have Reached 70 Million

The PlayStation 3 released November 11th 2006, and now, Sony has announced that PS3 sales hit sales of 70 million units on November 4th just under 6 years.

To put some perspective on this the PS3's predecessor, the PlayStation 2, sold 100 million units in a similar time-frame. The Xbox 360, meanwhile, hit the 70 million mark in September of this year, despite launching a year before the PlayStation 3 without having to contend with the immediate breakout success of the Wii, which released just over a week after the PS3's debut.

Sony also announced that they ve sold 15 million PlayStation Move controllers, whereas Microsoft by contrast has sold over 20 million Kinect cameras. The PlayStation Move figure is murky of course, as many if not most Move wielders have purchased multiple motion controllers.

At this rate, do you expect the PlayStation 3 to surpass the Xbox 36o before the next generation hits? Anyone want to take a stab at guessing the amount of actual Move owners? Let us know in the comments.

Sony: Play Pirated PS3 Games or Unauthorized Content, Get Banned For Life

With the PS3 having been hacked all over again, the number of gamers who install custom firmware and pirate games is sure to rise. In response, Sony has released a Customer Alert saying that if they catch you, you ll be permanently banned from the PSN and SEN services:

> Unauthorized software for the PlayStation 3 system was recently released by hackers. Use of such software violates the terms of the System Software License Agreement for the PlayStation 3 System and the Terms of Services and User Agreement for the PlayStation Network/Sony Entertainment Network and its Community Code of Conduct provisions.
>
> Violation of the System Software License Agreement for the PlayStation 3 system invalidates the consumer s right to access that system. Consumers running unauthorized or pirated software may have their access to the PlayStation Network and access to Sony Entertainment Network services through PlayStation 3 system terminated permanently.
>
> To avoid permanent termination, consumers must immediately cease using and delete all unauthorized or pirated software from their PlayStation 3 systems.

Of course, an issue Sony faces is that a lot of pirates simply won t go online with their PS3, but considering the fact that Microsoft regularly bans those who pirate 360 games and still try to go online, there are certainly those out there that are willing to risk having their accounts banned just to save a little money.

If you use CFW for homebrew apps that aren t pirated games it s likely you ll also be banned as it s seen as unauthorized content. While it s hard to argue a case for allowing pirated content, CFW and homebrew is a

matter of fierce debate. Where do you stand? And could you live with a permanent ban from the PSN? Remember, once they have your DNA there ll be no chance to trick the system.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online - Online Users Growl & Purr!

AtGames To Launch Atari Flashback 4 To Celebrate Atari’s 40th Anniversary!

AtGames Digital Media Ltd. is launching the Atari-licensed 40th Anniversary Special Edition Item the Atari Flashback 4 console. This product recreates for gamers the original video gaming experience of the widely appealing Atari 2600 video game console (30 million units sold worldwide) from the 1980’s.

In the Flashback 4, timeless Atari titles such as Asteroids, Missile Command, Centipede, as well as other video classics such as Space Invaders and Jungle Hunt plus 70 other games promise to give hours of the purest video gaming entertainment for the whole family.

With styling based on the original Atari 2600, the Flashback 4 is completed with two wireless retro joysticks, also based on the original Atari designs. The retro console allows gamers to go back in time and experience how it all started, and evidences why retro gamers still say that the Atari games are as playable now as it was then.

The Atari Flashback 4 is an easy to use plug and play device that you use with your TV that provides an affordable piece of video gaming nostalgia suitable for the whole family.

The two wireless controllers afford gamers the freedom of playing games remotely.

"Atari is a legendary brand that goes beyond borders and time. We are delighted to be Atari’s partner in celebrating Atari’s 40th Anniversary", says Dr. Ping-Kang Hsiung, CEO of AtGames Digital Media Ltd.

The Atari Flashback 4 will be available in October 2012 for the price of $49.99.

Features:

- Design based on original Atari 2600
- Two user friendly wireless retro joysticks with extra menu button
- 75 preloaded games
- Plug and play into your TV
- Classic limited edition Atari Asteroidsfi poster included

Games List:

* 3D Tic-Tac-Toe * Adventure * Adventure II * Air•Sea Battle * Aquaventure*

Asteroids * Backgammon * Basketball * Battlezone * Black Jack * Bowling * Breakout * Canyon Bomber * Centipede * Championship Soccer * Circus Atari * Combat Two * Combat * Crystal Castles * Demons to Diamonds * Desert Falcon * Dodge 'Em * Double Dunk * Fatal Run * Flag Capture * Football * Frog Pond * Front Line * Fun with Numbers * Golf * Grand Prix * Gravitar * Hangman * Haunted House * Home Run * Human Cannonball * Jungle Hunt * Maze Craze * Miniature Golf * Missile Command * Night Driver * Off The Wall * Outlaw * Polaris * Realsports Baseball * Realsports Basketball * Realsports Soccer * Realsports Volleyball * Return to Haunted House * Saboteur * Save Mary * Sky Diver * Slot Machine * Slot Racers * Solaris * Space Invaders * Space War * Sprintmaster * Star Ship * Steeplechase * Stellar Track * Street Racer * Submarine Commander * Super Baseball * Super Breakout * Super Football * Surround * Tempest * Video Checkers * Video Chess * Video Olympics * Video Pinball * Warlords * Wizard * Yars' Revenge

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

UAE Tightens Laws on Political Activism on Web

The United Arab Emirates set stricter Internet monitoring and enforcement codes Tuesday that include giving authorities wider leeway to crack down on Web activists for offenses such as mocking the country's rulers or calling for demonstrations.

The measures are another sign of tougher cyber-policing efforts by Western-backed leaders across the Gulf amid growing concerns over perceived political or security threats since the Arab Spring uprisings.

The Web clampdowns, however, have brought outcry from rights groups and media freedom advocates that claim Gulf authorities are increasingly muzzling free expression in the name of preserving the powers of the ruling clans from Kuwait to Oman.

The new UAE codes posted on the official news agency WAM also raise questions about potential new red lines for the country's huge expatriate work force in which parodies and pointed criticism of the UAE are common fodder on websites. It's unclear, too, whether the codes could put a chill on media coverage of sensitive issues such as the rising profile of Islamist factions.

The UAE has not faced any street protests during the Arab Spring upheavals, but authorities have stepped up arrests and pressure on groups including an Islamist organization, Al Islah, that official claim seeks to undermine the country's ruling system. In September, Dubai's police chief, Lt. Gen. Dahi Khalfan Tamim, warned of an "international plot" to overthrow the Gulf governments by Islamists inspired by the rise to power of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

Many of the codes in UAE's updated Internet law focus on issues such as online fraud, privacy protection and efforts to combat prostitution.

But a major section spells out sweeping limits and possible prison terms for any posts "to deride or to damage the reputation or the stature of the state or any of its institutions," including the rulers and high officials across the UAE a federation of seven semiautonomous emirates.

It also outlaws "information, news, caricatures or any other kind of pictures" that authorities believe could threaten security or "public order." These include Web posts calling for public protests or "disobeying the laws and regulations of the state."

The decree, issued by the UAE President Sheik Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, came just hours after the UAE was elected to a three-year seat on the U.N. Human Rights Council.

In an apparent response to the worldwide chaos touched off in September over a video clip denigrating the Prophet Muhammad, the new codes said jail terms are possible for any Internet posts that "display contempt" for Islam or any other faith.

Across the Gulf, other authorities have stepped up prosecutions against online activists and others. Earlier this month, a Bahraini man was sentenced to six months in prison on charges of insulting the Gulf nation's king in Twitter posts. In September, a journalist-blogger in Oman received a one-year prison term for alleged anti-government writings.

Israel and Hamas Battle on Social Media as Well

The hostilities between Israel and Hamas have found a new battleground: social media.

The Israeli Defense Forces and Hamas militants have exchanged fiery tweets throughout the fighting in a separate war to influence public opinion.

Shortly after it launched its campaign Wednesday by killing Hamas' top military commander Ahmed Jabari, the Israeli military's media office announced a "widespread campaign on terror sites & operatives in the (hash)Gaza Strip" on its Twitter account.

It then posted a 10-second black-and-white video of the airstrike on its official YouTube page. Google Inc., which owns YouTube, removed the video for a time early Thursday, but reconsidered and restored it.

A tweet from (at)idfspokesperson said: "We recommend that no Hamas operatives, whether low level or senior leaders, show their faces above ground in the days ahead."

Hamas, under its (at)AlQassamBrigade English-language account, which is largely considered to be the official Twitter account for its military wing, fired back: "Our blessed hands will reach your leaders and soldiers wherever they are (You Opened Hell Gates on Yourselves)."

The Israeli military's media office Twitter account, which gained more than 50,000 followers in just 24 hours, is just one of various online platforms used to relay real-time information to the public, sometimes

even before it is conveyed to reporters.

The IDF news desk's email signature reads like a catalog for new media platforms, including links to its YouTube channel, Facebook page and Flickr photo albums. The military also just opened a Tumblr account in English and plans to launch one in Spanish.

Following the assassination, the military tweeted a graphically designed photograph of Jabari, with a red backdrop and capitalized block letters reading "ELIMINATED," drawing both celebration and fierce criticism from a range of users. Throughout the operation, the military and its supporters have tweeted with the hashtag "IsraelUnderFire," while many Palestinians have tweeted with a separate hashtag "GazaUnderAttack."

The operation, launched after days of rocket fire from Gaza into southern Israel, marks the most intense round of violence since Israel and Hamas waged a three-week war four years ago.

Palestinian militants fired more rockets into Israel on Thursday, killing three people and striking the outskirts of Tel Aviv. Israeli strikes have killed 15 Palestinians.

Military spokeswoman Lt. Col. Avital Leibovich said that in the four years since Israel and Hamas last dueled, an "additional war zone" developed on the internet.

"I'm sort of addicted to Twitter, you can say. It's a great tool to release information without the touch of editors' hands," she said. "Militaries are usually closed operations, but we're doing the opposite."

Leibovich is also the head of a two-month-old "Interactive Media" branch of the IDF, staffed with around 30 soldiers trained in writing and graphic-design skills. As an indicator of the significance of the department to the military, Leibovich said she'll be leaving her current spokeswoman's post in February to focus solely on running the interactive branch.

The Hamas media wing has dramatically improved its outreach from the days when their loyalists used to scrawl graffiti on walls in the Gaza Strip.

Hamas' militant wing keeps a frequently updated Facebook page and a multilanguage website. They tend to update reporters of rocket fire through an SMS distribution list.

Nader Elkhuzundar, a prolific 25-year-old Twitter user from Gaza, said the recent social media barrage reached "a new level of psychological war."

"Twitter gives us a voice, but there's also a lot of misinformation at the same time. It's a tool you need to be careful using because there's a lot of noise out there," he said.

Although there were tweets directed at the IDF's Twitter account claiming that the Israeli government and military websites were hacked and taken down Thursday, the Israeli military denied it.

"The IDF blog was down for a very short period, less than hour in the afternoon, only due to heavy traffic," according to Eytan Buchman, an Israeli military spokesman.

Israel's ministry of public diplomacy also started a "Special Operations

Center," a virtual situation room of sorts, working with Israeli bloggers and volunteers to "get Israeli's message out to the world virtually, to Arabs as well, through social media and other web platforms," said spokesman Gal Ilan.

Tamir Sheafer, chair of the political communication program at Hebrew University, said the embrace of social media by both sides indicates recognition that "you don't win conflicts like this one on the ground; you win it through public opinion."

But the use of social media for public diplomacy is also a double-edged sword, says Natan Sachs, a fellow at the Brookings Institute in Washington.

"On the one hand, Israel has gotten better in conveying their messages to the public, but on the flip side, we're seeing flippant remarks. Twitter accounts can be used carelessly and there's a danger of overplaying things, which they might be doing," he said.

"They also might be falling into the trap of thinking they have their public relations covered, but really, it's their policy and not their tweets that matters at the end of the day," Sachs added.

YouTube had removed the Hamas assassination video after concluding the clip violated its terms of service. The site's reviewers later reconsidered that decision and restored the video Thursday.

"With the massive volume of videos on our site, sometimes we make the wrong call," YouTube said in a statement.

Buchman, the Israeli military spokesman, said there was no official comment, except that "we're glad they reconsidered that decision."

Google tries to ensure that the clips on YouTube obey disparate laws around the world and adhere to standards of decorum while also protecting the principles of free speech. It's a mind-boggling task, given more than 100,000 hours of video is sent to YouTube every day.

YouTube routinely blocks video in specific countries if it violates local laws. It also removes video deemed to violate standards primarily designed to weed out videos that infringe copyrights, show pornography or contain "hate speech."

Given that YouTube isn't regulated by the government, Google is within its legal rights to make its own decisions about video. Nevertheless, some people believe Google should always fall on the side of free expression because YouTube has become such an important forum for opinion, commentary and news.

A video showing an assassination arguably falls in a gray area of whether it is a news event or a gratuitous act of violence.

This isn't the only assassination that can be watched on YouTube. Numerous clips on YouTube replay the fatal shooting of U.S. President John F. Kennedy in 1963, including his gruesome head wound.

Google doesn't share details about how its video reviews are conducted, but it employs an unknown number of reviewers who regularly scan the site for violations of local laws and the company's guidelines.

Google discussed its approach to Internet content in a November 2007 blog post that came about a year after buying YouTube for $1.76 billion.

"We have a bias in favor of people's right to free expression in everything we do," wrote Rachel Whetstone, Google's director of global communications and public affairs, "We are driven by a belief that more information generally means more choice, more freedom and ultimately more power for the individual. But we also recognize that freedom of expression can't be and shouldn't be without some limits. The difficulty is in deciding where those boundaries are drawn."

Usually, the decisions are dictated by the law in the more than 100 different countries where Google's services are offered. The laws in some countries prohibit material that would seem tame in other countries. For instance, Brazil prohibits video ridiculing political candidates in the three months leading up to an election, while Germany outlaws content featuring Nazi paraphernalia.

In the first half of this year alone, Google said it received more than 1,700 court orders and other requests from government agencies around the world to remove more than 17,700 different pieces of content from its services.

The company rejects many of these demands. For instance, Google says it complied with less than half of the U.S. court orders and government orders take down nearly 4,200 pieces of content from January through June.

Hackers Just Stole Over 3 Million Social Security Numbers

If you've filed tax returns in South Carolina sometime since 1998, you might be in a little bit of hot water. An unidentified, foreign hacker has gotten into the state's Department of Revenue, pilfering around 3.6 million social security numbers, and 387,000 credit and debit card numbers. In other words, no small haul.

It's a pretty devastating, wide-reaching hack. South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley described the situation this way:

> The number of records breached requires an unprecedented, large-scale response by the Department of Revenue, the State of South Carolina and all our citizens.

In the wake of the attack, Haley has assured citizens that the exploited security holes have been patched, and steps will be taken to ensure that this kind of break does not happen again. It's a good move, but you might say it's too little too late. As for the person who pulled off this theft? Haley "[wants] this person slammed against the wall." Efforts are currently underway to find this person who authorities are certain is located outside the U.S. by the FBI and the U.S. Secret Service. You can bet cyber-security will be a bigger issue from here on out.

Anyone who believes their social security number is at risk should call 1-866-578-5422. If you're an (un)lucky winner, you'll be eligable for a free year of identity theft protection via Experian's ProtectMyID service. No one can get your Social Security number back though.

Apple, HTC Sign Cross-licensing Agreement, End Lawsuits

IconInteresting news in the middle of the night: Apple and HTC have announced they've settled all their patent disputes, bringing an end to all running lawsuits between the two companies. The companies signed a ten-year cross-licensing deal. Considering Apple's legal assault on Android hasn't been going particularly well, this really shouldn't come as a surprise.

The two companies sent out a press release during the night to announce the cross-licensing agreement. "HTC and Apple have reached a global settlement that includes the dismissal of all current lawsuits and a ten-year license agreement," the two state, "The license extends to current and future patents held by both parties. The terms of the settlement are confidential."

Apple started its legal crusade against HTC well over two years ago, and HTC obviously couldn't do anything else but reply in the form of countersuits. Since then, the lawsuits have been flying back and forth, but due to Samsung's meteoric rise in popularity, Apple shifted most of its focus to Samsung instead since it represents more of a threat to Apple's business than HTC does.

Both companies also added a short statement. "HTC is pleased to have resolved its dispute with Apple, so HTC can focus on innovation instead of litigation," said Peter Chou, HTC's CEO. Apple CEO Tim Cook added that "we are glad to have reached a settlement with HTC. We will continue to stay laser focused on product innovation."

What's interesting here is that we're looking at a cross-licensing agreement, and not a mere sack of money going from HTC to Apple. In fact, HTC has told The Verge that HTC "does not expect this license agreement to have any adverse material impact on the financials of the company", meaning it didn't cost HTC a whole lot of money. This seems to indicate that the actual cross-licensing was of more import than HTC licensing Apple's patents; i.e., that HTC's patents were anything but worthless.

While this licensing agreement may come as a surprise, the fact of the matter is that from Apple's point of view, it just makes good business sense to start bringing an end to its legal assault on Android. These past few years of patent aggression by Apple have given the Cupertino company little to nothing - the UK, The Netherlands, Germany, Australia; Apple didn't win anything substantial anywhere, while the lawsuits did tarnish the company's name. Nobody wants to be known for litigation.

The only potentially meaningful win Apple has scored so far is in the US, but even that win is on shaky ground as judge Lucy Koh has recently agreed to consider Samsung's evidence of juror misconduct. While the legal outcome might obviously be different - Samsung is really shooting for the stars here - it's pretty clear to any impartial observer that the jury in this case, especially the foreman, has acted very questionably.

In other words - it looks like to me Apple is settling here because its legal assault simply isn't going too well. While I applaud the two companies settling, I would've much rather seen all this come to a massive clash, with a judge slapping all of these whiny multi-billion dollar crybabies on the wrist for wasting public resources on what are

essentially the corporate equivalent of several douchebags comparing penis lengths.

Public School Teachers in Hot Water After Bashing Obama on Facebook

Two public school teachers have found themselves in hot water at work after posting messages critical of President Barack Obama to their personal Facebook pages.

After last Tuesday s election, according to ABC affiliate WSOC-TV, South Carolina-based eighth-grade math teacher Sharon Aceta updated her status on Facebook with this sarcastic message: Congrats Obama. As one of my students sang down the hallway, We get to keep our food stamps   which I pay for because they can t budget their money and really, neither can you.

A spokesperson for Rawlinson Road Middle School, Aceta s employer, said that multiple people had contacted the school with complaints.

 The teacher has admitted that poor judgment was used in this case, and she is very apologetic, said the spokesperson, Elaine Baker, according to WSOC.

The school suspended Aceta for one day, on Friday. She reportedly spent that day apologizing for her actions. She also swiftly deleted the post from Facebook.

Aceta probably won t face any additional disciplinary action, according to officials.

Meanwhile, in Ohio, a teacher at Linden McKinley High School posted an even more caustic message on her Facebook page, according to CBS affiliate WBNS-TV.

 Congrats to those dependent on government, homosexuals, potheads, JAY-Z fans, non Christians, non taxpayers, illegals, communists, Muslims, planned murder clinics, enemies of America, Satan You WON!

The school, which received complaints about the post, has not yet issued an official reprimand of the teacher.

Microsoft Just Lost Its Windows Chief

Microsoft has announced that Windows president Steven Sinofsky is leaving the company, effective immediately.

No reason was given for the sudden resignation, which the company was presenting as a mutual decision. Coming a couple of weeks after the official launch of Windows 8, however, it clearly wasn’t the best timing.

"I am grateful for the many years of work that Steven has contributed to the company, CEO Steve Ballmer said in a statement. "To continue this success it is imperative that we continue to drive alignment across all Microsoft teams, and have more integrated and rapid development cycles for

our offerings."

Sinofsky, above, who in looks and style bears more than a passing resemblance to Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, was formerly one of the most trusted members of Ballmer's inner circle. When the Microsoft Surface Tablet was unveiled at a press event in June, it was Sinofsky who led the charge (and who was an unfortunate victim of a tech glitch where the tablet crashed, as captured in this video).

Ballmer admitted this weekend that early sales of the Surface tablet were "modest."

According to AllThingsD, sources inside Microsoft are comparing Sinofsky's departure to that of Scott Forstall from Apple. Both, apparently, were strong-willed executives who didn't get on well with their teams.

In Sinofsky's case, Ballmer's statement suggests that this was holding back the speed of Windows' development. Indeed, he'll be succeeded by not one but two executives: Julie Larson-Green on the engineering side of Windows, and Tami Reller, formerly the division CFO, on the business side.

A former engineer who rose through the ranks of the Office team at Microsoft, Sinofsky has been heading up the Windows division since 2009. He headed up development of both Windows 7 and 8 after the disaster that was Vista.

Microsoft Announces Leadership Changes to Drive Next Wave of Products

Microsoft Corp. today announced that Windows and Windows Live President Steven Sinofsky will be leaving the company and that Julie Larson-Green will be promoted to lead all Windows software and hardware engineering. Tami Reller retains her roles as chief financial officer and chief marketing officer and will assume responsibility for the business of Windows. Both executives will report directly to Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer.

These changes are effective immediately.

I am grateful for the many years of work that Steven has contributed to the company, Ballmer said. The products and services we have delivered to the market in the past few months mark the launch of a new era at Microsoft. We ve built an incredible foundation with new releases of Microsoft Office, Windows 8, Windows Phone 8, Microsoft Surface, Windows Server 2012 and Halo 4, and great integration of services such as Bing, Skype and Xbox across all our products. To continue this success it is imperative that we continue to drive alignment across all Microsoft teams, and have more integrated and rapid development cycles for our offerings.

Julie Larson-Green

It is impossible to count the blessings I have received over my years at Microsoft. I am humbled by the professionalism and generosity of everyone I have had the good fortune to work with at this awesome company, Sinofsky said.

Since 1993, Larson-Green has worked on and led some of the most successful products for Microsoft, including the user experiences for early versions of Internet Explorer, and helped drive the thinking behind the refresh of the user experience for Microsoft Office. For Windows 7 and Windows 8 she was responsible for program management, user interface design and research, as well as development of all international releases. She has a master’s degree in software engineering from Seattle University and a bachelor’s degree in business administration from Western Washington University. In her new role she will be responsible for all future Windows product development in addition to future hardware opportunities.

Tami Reller

Leading Windows engineering is an incredible challenge and opportunity, and as I looked at the technical and business skills required to continue our Windows trajectory great communication skills, a proven ability to work across product groups, strong design, deep technical expertise, and a history of anticipating and meeting customer needs it was clear to me that Julie is the best possible person for this job, and I m excited to have her in this role, Ballmer said.

Reller joined Windows in 2007 from the Microsoft Dynamics Division where she held a number of leadership positions. She began her career in technology at Great Plains Software in 1984 while still in college, and was the company s chief financial officer at the time the company was acquired by Microsoft in 2001. She has a bachelor s degree in mathematics from Minnesota State University Moorhead and an MBA from St. Mary’s College in Moraga, Calif. In her expanded role she will assume the lead in driving business and marketing strategy for Windows devices, including Surface and partner devices, in addition to her current marketing and finance responsibilities.

Twitter Leaves Placeholder Message for Copyright Violations

Under a new policy, Twitter will leave a placeholder message when it removes content resulting from a complaint by a copyright holder.

Previously, the content was removed entirely, making it more difficult for people to figure out why it disappeared.

"In an effort to be as transparent as possible regarding the removal or restriction of access to user-posted content, we clearly mark withheld Tweets and media to indicate to viewers when content has been withheld," according to its information page dealing with copyright and Digital Millennium Copyright Act issues.

Twitter will remove content such as profile photos and other photos as well as links to infringing material if it determines a complainant is the rightful copyright owner and the material has been used without permission.

Twitter attempts to contact the affected account holder and provide the person with a copy of the takedown notice and instructions for how to contest the removal.

Those DMCA notifications are also provided by Twitter to Chilling Effects minus any personal information, Twitter said. The website tracks copyright

and DMCA issues.

When a tweet has been scrubbed, the entry will still appear with the title "Tweet withheld" followed by: "This Tweet from @Username has been withheld in response to a report from the copyright holder. Learn more." A similar message is displayed when other media content has been removed.

Twitter will suspend accounts that have had repeated copyright violations, and in some cases, terminate accounts.

In UK, Twitter, Facebook Rants Land Some in Jail

One teenager made offensive comments about a murdered child on Twitter. Another young man wrote on Facebook that British soldiers should "go to hell." A third posted a picture of a burning paper poppy, symbol of remembrance of war dead.

All were arrested, two convicted, and one jailed — and they're not the only ones. In Britain, hundreds of people are prosecuted each year for posts, tweets, texts and emails deemed menacing, indecent, offensive or obscene, and the number is growing as our online lives expand.

Lawyers say the mounting tally shows the problems of a legal system trying to regulate 21st century communications with 20th century laws. Civil libertarians say it is a threat to free speech in an age when the Internet gives everyone the power to be heard around the world.

"Fifty years ago someone would have made a really offensive comment in a public space and it would have been heard by relatively few people," said Mike Harris of free-speech group Index on Censorship. "Now someone posts a picture of a burning poppy on Facebook and potentially hundreds of thousands of people can see it.

"People take it upon themselves to report this offensive material to police, and suddenly you've got the criminalization of offensive speech."

Figures obtained by The Associated Press through a freedom of information request show a steadily rising tally of prosecutions in Britain for electronic communications — phone calls, emails and social media posts that are "grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character — from 1,263 in 2009 to 1,843 in 2011. The number of convictions grew from 873 in 2009 to 1,286 last year.

Behind the figures are people — mostly young, many teenagers — who find that a glib online remark can have life-altering consequences.

No one knows this better than Paul Chambers, who in January 2010, worried that snow would stop him catching a flight to visit his girlfriend, tweeted: "Crap! Robin Hood airport is closed. You've got a week and a bit to get your (expletive) together otherwise I'm blowing the airport sky high."

A week later, anti-terrorist police showed up at the office where he worked as a financial supervisor.

Chambers was arrested, questioned for eight hours, charged, tried, convicted and fined. He lost his job, amassed thousands of pounds (dollars)

in legal costs and was, he says, "essentially unemployable" because of his criminal record.

But Chambers, now 28, was lucky. His case garnered attention online, generating its own hashtag (hash)twitterjoketrial and bringing high-profile Twitter users, including actor and comedian Stephen Fry, to his defense.

In July, two and half years after Chambers' arrest, the High Court overturned his conviction. Justice Igor Judge said in his judgment that the law should not prevent "satirical or iconoclastic or rude comment, the expression of unpopular or unfashionable opinion about serious or trivial matters, banter or humor, even if distasteful to some or painful to those subjected to it."

But the cases are coming thick and fast. Last month, 19-year-old Matthew Woods was sentenced to 12 weeks in jail for making offensive tweets about a missing 5-year-old girl, April Jones.

The same month Azhar Ahmed, 20, was sentenced to 240 hours of community service for writing on Facebook that soldiers "should die and go to hell" after six British troops were killed in Afghanistan. Ahmed had quickly deleted the post, which he said was written in anger, but was convicted anyway.

On Sunday Remembrance Day a 19-year-old man was arrested in southern England after police received a complaint about a photo on Facebook showing the burning of a paper poppy. He was held for 24 hours before being released on bail and could face charges.

For civil libertarians, this was the most painfully ironic arrest of all. Poppies are traditionally worn to commemorate the sacrifice of those who died for Britain and its freedoms.

"What was the point of winning either World War if, in 2012, someone can be casually arrested by Kent Police for burning a poppy?" tweeted David Allen Green, a lawyer with London firm Preiskel who worked on the Paul Chambers case.

Critics of the existing laws say they are both inadequate and inconsistent.

Many of the charges come under a section of the 2003 Electronic Communications Act, an update of a 1930s statute intended to protect telephone operators from harassment. The law was drafted before Facebook and Twitter were born, and some lawyers say is not suited to policing social media, where users often have little control over who reads their words.

It and related laws were intended to deal with hate mail or menacing phone calls to individuals, but they are being used to prosecute in cases where there seems to be no individual victim and often no direct threat.

And the Internet is so vast that policing it even if desirable is a hit-and-miss affair. For every offensive remark that draws attention, hundreds are ignored. Conversely, comments that people thought were made only to their Facebook friends or Twitter followers can flash around the world.

While the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that First Amendment protections of freedom of speech apply to the Internet, restrictions on online expression

in other Western democracies vary widely.

In Germany, where it is an offense to deny the Holocaust, a neo-Nazi group has had its Twitter account blocked. Twitter has said it also could agree to block content in other countries at the request of their authorities.

There’s no doubt many people in Britain have genuinely felt offended or even threatened by online messages. The Sun tabloid has launched a campaign calling for tougher penalties for online "trolls" who bully people on the Web. But others in a country with a cherished image as a bastion of free speech are sensitive to signs of a clampdown.

In September Britain’s chief prosecutor, Keir Starmer, announced plans to draw up new guidelines for social media prosecutions. Starmer said he recognized that too many prosecutions "will have a chilling effect on free speech."

"I think the threshold for prosecution has to be high," he told the BBC.

Starmer is due to publish the new guidelines in the next few weeks. But Chambers — reluctant poster boy of online free speech — is worried nothing will change.

"For a couple of weeks after the appeal, we got word of judges actually quoting the case in similar instances and the charges being dropped," said Chambers, who today works for his brother’s warehouse company. "We thought, ’Fantastic! That’s exactly what we fought for.’ But since then we’ve had cases in the opposite direction. So I don’t know if lessons have been learned, really."

How To Clean Up Your Online Reputation

The Internet knows a lot about you, maybe too much. So how do you clean up your online reputation and get control of your image to reflect who you are now — or how you want a prospective employer to perceive you?

A study from Microsoft Research indicates that 70% of online recruiters have nixed candidates because of search results that come up around their names. So your identity online is vital. We’ll start with the tried and true ways to clean your rep and then move on to my sneakier methods.

First the basics: Delete questionable posts on all social networks — Twitter, old-school Myspace entries, and of course Facebook. And about Facebook — get your privacy settings locked down. To access the settings, click the drop down arrow in the top-right corner of your main Facebook page, then click Privacy Settings. At minimum, make sure your posts are only shared with friends. Then scroll down through all the settings and make sure what you watch, read, and listen to aren’t publically searchable. If you’ve been tagged in anyone else’s dicey pictures — untag, untag, untag. Click the picture, choose options and click "I want to untag myself."

That’s all the stuff you can control, but what if there’s info sprayed across the Internet that you can’t remove, maybe you were busted for graffiti back in high school and it made the town paper? Or worse, what if someone went on a rant about you and it shows up when your name is entered into a search? There are certainly advocates who say you should write

letters asking individuals or organizations to remove those postings, but in real life it’s pretty useless. Instead, take solace from the fact that 97% of searchers never look beyond the first 3 pages of search results. If you can push the negative results down by posting positive or neutral information that’s more current or has more appeal to search engines, you’ll win the battle 97% of the time.

To create material that search engines will find, the first step is putting your name out there on high-traffic sites:

Google: Google ranks its own sites higher than others, so create a Google Plus account, use the Google Dashboard to manage your profile, and create a Youtube channel all using your real name.

LinkedIn: Create a LinkedIn profile, this is one of the most powerful tools you have in establishing your work reputation. LinkedIn is the de facto resume and job networking site for professionals these days.

Yourrealname.com: This is the big one: buy the domain name for your real name. Then start a blog using one of the simple blog tools like WordPress or Blogger. You can either host your blog at that URL or build an independent site. I own beckyworley.com, and I have a site that reflects my current work, links to my social media pages, and houses my resume. I used Squarespace to build the site and it took me about a day to get it looking the way I wanted it to.

Tweak your name. Any chance you can apply for a job using a slightly different form of your name? If you are Bob Smith with a slightly murky online reputation, applying for jobs as Robert Smith and representing yourself online as Robert going forward could help you distance yourself from that rascal "Bob."

Flood social sites. Go over to namechk.com, type in your real name (or your new professional name) and sign up for every social site you can, all those sites will boost the appearance of your name in search sites.

Use images to your advantage. Start a Flickr photo sharing site and write your name on all the (appropriate) pictures you post. Do the same with Instagram, Tumblr and photobucket.

Don’t forget about the real world. Everything you do these days is archived online volunteering for charities, PTA boards, 5K runs, seminars you attend. If your college or high school has class notes, submit info. Write a well thought out letter to the editor, do an online genealogy for your family, attend county meetings where the names of attendants are published online. All these well-established sites get lots of search engine love.

Link Link Link. Once any of the above listings of your name appear online, link to them from your blog or website. It’s the interlinking that gives you real search engine power.

You can of course hire a reputation service to do all of this for you, but if you have the time and want to save a few thousand dollars, these techniques can really help.

If you have successful tips about how you’ve sculpted your online reputation, head over to our Facebook page and share your ideas.

Lawyer Sues Microsoft Over Surface Storage Space

A California-based lawyer is suing Microsoft for not providing the advertised amount of storage space on its Surface tablet.

Andrew Sokolowski filed suit in Los Angeles Superior Court after discovering that his 32GB Surface tablet did not actually allow users to load 32GB worth of content. About half of the tablet's storage is consumed by pre-loaded apps.

"Mr. Sokolowski's lawsuit against Microsoft is about protecting consumers as we head into the holiday shopping season," Sokolowski's attorney, Rhett Francisco, said in a statement. "Microsoft is misrepresenting the storage capacity and capabilities of its Surface tablet, and consumers should know about it."

Francisco said Sokolowski is not asking for damages. "We have only asked that Microsoft correct its unlawful practices by providing consumers with notice of the true characteristics of the Surface tablets and that Microsoft refund profits from sales it obtained as a result of misrepresenting the characteristics of its Surface tablets," he said.

According to his LinkedIn profile, Sokolowski has a solo practice in Los Angeles that focuses on "protecting consumers' and employees' rights."

A Microsoft spokeswoman said "this lawsuit is without merit."

"Customers understand the operating system and pre-installed applications reside on the device's internal storage thereby reducing the total free space," she said. "Surface with Windows RT customers benefit from the ability to attach additional storage via the integrated microSD slot or full-size USB port."

Francisco, however, said that is deceptive. "The consumer is going to be forced to upgrade the Surface tablet by buying a peripheral device that expands the Surface's memory to what the consumer initially thought he or she purchased in the first place. That's simply unfair to consumers, that's a violation of the law, and Microsoft knows it."

Tech-savvy shoppers are likely aware of the storage constraints on their modern-day gadgets. If you buy a new 16GB iPhone, for example, you won't get all 16GB for your apps and music. My 16GB iPhone 5 is currently using 9.2GB of storage, but I only have 4.2GB of available space, or 13.4GB in total. The same applies to other smartphones, tablets, and PCs on the market today.

Microsoft has an FAQ on its website about the Surface storage space, but Francisco said it is not easily accessible. "The alleged notice is actually intentionally buried by Microsoft deep within their website, under the 'support' section," he said.

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